ART & SCIENCE OF GRANT WRITING TRAINING: THE SCIENCE OF FINDING AND WRITING GRANTS MODULE

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

There are a variety of funding sources available to pay for a program or project. Public resources include funding from government agencies as well as state, county or local municipalities.

Types of Funding

PUBLIC
- Federal Agencies
  - Two types
    - Competitive
    - Non-competitive
- State and Local Agencies
  - State, County and local municipalities and local government agencies. Process can be competitive.

PRIVATE
- Foundations
  - Award to private, NP, Tax exempt (501) (c)(3) for:
    - General support
    - Endowment
    - Program or project grants
    - Matching or challenge grants
    - Fellowships/Scholarships
    - Capital grants
- Corporations
  - Direct giving, donations, and cause related marketing that produce income
- Professional and Trade Associations
- Fundraising Activities

There are also competitive and noncompetitive public funds distributed by the Federal Government.

An example of non-competitive funding is HUD's Community Development Block Grant dollars. These funds are awarded by HUD to states and entitlement communities by a formula. These jurisdictions then decide how they will spend the funds to address a community need.

Often, these "entitlement" jurisdictions allow local agencies and nonprofits to compete for funding. If awarded, the organization must agree to follow HUD's regulations for managing and expending the dollars.

Private funds are made available from a wide range of organization such as Foundation, corporations, professional or trade organizations. In addition nonprofits conduct fundraising activities. Privately funded grants usually require less paperwork and offer more flexibility than public funds.

Today most large, significant community programs rely on a combination of both private and public dollars to cover the cost of services and operations. With every new supporter (source of revenue) there is an increase in the services that could be offered. However, each new funder also requires an increase in administrative costs to properly track and account for the funds. Public dollars always require paperwork, and sometimes it can be extreme.

There are a host of resources available from private organizations. Often local foundations offer significant funding to nonprofits that support work within a given community or state. Corporations headquartered in a city have been known to give generously to the state or community they are housed in. Seattle and Washington State have benefitted greatly from the Gates Foundation (as have other charities throughout the world.)

Resources - Private

- **Foundations**
  - Family
  - Corporate
  - Community
  - Industry-related

- **Corporations** (including financial institutions)
  - Grant or in-kind donation
  - "WIIFM" Factor

- **Local Organizations**
  - Service Organizations
  - Public Charities
  - Interest Groups
  - Fraternities/Sororities

Corporations support communities in various ways including providing materials or other in-kind donations. Nonprofit seeking resources should be prepared to show the "What's In It For Me" benefit of programs and projects they administer. In other words the funders should see a direct connection between the support they provide and the impact their resources have on the community they have a vested interest in.

Local Organizations (as well as individuals) round out the list of places where a nonprofit can go for financial support.

Access to federal resources is only a web search away. The grants.gov website allows anyone to conduct a search for funding by agency, type of project, or other criteria. From this web site you can also pull down an application or "Notice of Funding Availability" (NOFA) to determine if it is a program you may

Resources - Public

- **www.grants.gov**
  - Website for ALL Federal Agencies
  - Search engine
  - RSS feeds

- **State, County & Municipal websites**
  - Many States make applications available on-line
  - County and local governments create their own processes for funding programs and projects

consider as a possible funding source.

Federal Grants

- Organizations, not individuals, typically apply for public resources
  - Institutions of higher education
  - Local government agencies
  - Non-profits
  - Hospitals
- In order to apply for Federal funding, an organization must have a DUNS number
  - Call 1-866-705-5711 or visit

  http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform

As mentioned previously there are nationally competitive programs where applications are sent to DC for review. In addition, for HUD and some other

Types of Federal Assistance

- DISCRETIONARY – applicant submits grant proposal to a Federal Agency (nationally competitive)

- FORMULA – applicant submits grant proposal to a State or other Public Agency (locally competitive)

- OTHER – funding opportunities that are not traditional grant programs

Federal programs, funds are provided to states and communities based on a formula. In turn these jurisdictions often allow local agencies to compete for these funds. Agencies awarded locally controlled federal funds become sub-grantees and must still follow all applicable Federal laws regarding the use and distribution of the dollars.

You can download the "Connecting with Communities" guide from the hud.gov website. The link for the 2008 guide is at:
http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa08/snuserguide.pdf

Federal Formula Funds

Block grant (formula) programs are awarded to state, local communities, or agencies. For HUD, Community Development Block Grants, HOME dollars, Emergency Shelter Grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids are all Block Grant Programs. Local agencies must apply to these agencies directly for support.

See HUD's "Connecting With Communities" brochure at http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofao8/snuserguide.pdf

Finding Federal Funds

- CFDA.gov - the on-line Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance which lists all of the funding opportunities available to the public. (each program has its own identification number)

- Grants.gov - a single access point for over 1,000 grant programs offered by 26 Federal grant-making agencies, as well as some state and local governments
  - Register at grants.gov for notification and RSS feeds

Two web sites – CFDA.gov and Grants.gov provide access to information on funding opportunities. On grants.gov you can subscribe to be alerted when specific types of grant application are made available. A new feature is the RSS feed, the site explains how to sign up for this notification service.

Federal grant applications are published in the Federal Register. A grant writer will need to retrieve the application package from the web after registering in the Central Contract Registry. Information on this process is provided in the appendix. In addition you can view the General Section of HUD's Competitive Program's NOFA at www.hud.gov

Grant Application Notice

- Published in the Federal Register
- Access via the Web (grants.gov)
- **Register to access electronic application**
- Usually includes a link to the actual application package with contains all of the vital information about the competition
  - Selection criteria
  - Program priorities
  - Contact information for program office
  - Required forms
  - Deadline

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Is Your Organization Ready?

Is Your Agency Ready to Find, Apply and Manage a Grant?

- Mission, Vision & Values Statement
- Market Analysis or Feasibility Study
- Strategic Plan & Budget Estimate
- Fundraising Plan

There is a specific process for registering your organization in order to apply for federal funds. The process is fully explained on the grants.gov website.

Do not wait to register your organization in the CCR, do it now. Only organizations properly registered can submit an application for federal funding. (*You must recertify each year!*) The process can take up to two weeks. Registering should be done as soon as your organization decides it is ready to seek federal funds. Waiting until the application package is available will take up time better spent on preparing your submission.

Now that you know that there are resources to pay for your program or project, it is time to assess how prepared your organization is to seek funding.

This workbook contains sections to help your organization to become ready to seek and then manage resources for the community program you wish to undertake. To conduct a successful program your organization needs to understand and accept:

- How the program being proposed will further the mission, vision and values of your organization.

- That the program being proposed addresses a community need supported by statistics and valid data.

- That the program being proposed is one that is supported by the overall community as well as those who are the potential beneficiaries.

- It is feasible for your organization to take on the project because it has staff with the necessary skills, capacity and experience to conduct a successful program.

- An analysis has been conducted that shows there is a gap in the services/programs offered in the community that your proposed program will help meet.

- Your organization has conducted strategic planning and has studied how the new program will impact it and determined that should move forward.

- There has been a realistic budget estimate done on the cost of the program

- There has been a fundraising plan developed to fund the program now and continue it in the future. If for a capital projects (bricks and mortar) there are funds to operate the facility once constructed.

When reviewing a NOFA keep note of:

- Who is eligible to apply for the funds?
- When is the application due (deadline?)
- What is the award amount per grant?
- How many projects will be funded?
- Who is the program contact?
- Is there matching requirements?
- Is there page limit, or other special instructions?

When you discover a potential funding source, review the application and answer the following questions based on the information provided by the funder.

- Who can apply? If the funder only wants applications from Certified 501 (c) (3) nonprofits, do not apply if you do not have the certification; it will a poor use of your time and energy.

- Due date? If you cannot spend a reasonable amount of time developing a competitive application, do not push to "get something in". This wastes resources. Funders prefer to read complete and well thought out applications and have little time for poorly constructed proposals. Federal applications have a set date and late applications are generally rejected. Most public funders do not accept late applications. If you have a question about the due date, ask early on in the development phase.

- Federal grants generally list the expected amount of funds that an organization can receive. Do not ask for more than is recommended. NO ONE GRANT WILL FUND YOUR ENTIRE PROEJCT. You will need multiple sources of funds for your project.

- Note how many awards for funds are planned to be granted. The fewer the number of grants awarded, the higher the competition.

- Keep track of the name and contact person listed in the application. You will need this if you need clarification of any part of the application package.

- Keep careful notes of what information you need to include documenting other funding and resources to be used for the program.

- Pay close attention to any special instructions.

- Remember the "Golden Rule." Those with the gold make the rules.

Key Questions continued

- Where can I get the application?
- How and where do I submit the application?
- Does the mission of my organization match up with the goals and objectives of the program described in the application?
- If I receive the funds, can my agency effectively administer the program?

Other information you need to know:

- How can you obtain the application package? If it is federal, remember you need to be fully registered and certified in grants.gov.

- All of HUD's applications must be submitted electronically. Most other federal agencies have also gone to electronic submission. Assess your office technology to ensure you can download, safe, store and then submit an electronic application. You will need a high-speed internet connection to submit an application electronically.

- Look again at the mission of your organization. Does it match the goals and objectives of the program described in the application?

- If you get the funding, do you have the capability of managing the funds and adhere to all of the regulatory requirements that go with the funding. Most dollars have strings, meaning there is paperwork required to administer and track the dollars received. Federal dollars have the most strings resulting in a complex management process.

Establish a Timeline

- Recipe: 2/3 planning and 1/3 writing
- Research program well in advance
- Assess time available to draft the application and determine if it is feasible to go forward
- Finalize any required partnerships in writing
- Complete all necessary registrations
- Submit grant application AT LEAST 48 to 24 HOURS prior to the deadline

Draft a timeline to accomplish all the tasks associated with crafting your grant application

As previously mentioned, make sure there is sufficient time to craft a good, well reasoned application.

If you apply for federal funds remember to register. Also, make sure that each year you recertify your agency in grants.gov.

Never wait to submit the application the day it is due. Always submit it early, 48 hours of even earlier. Submit during working hours when the grants help desk is staffed in case you have difficulty.

A grant writer or the writing team will need to be organized and have an understanding of the organization, program operations, funding and partnerships. The leader of the team must be able to track the process of crafting the document, obtain necessary approvals and signatures, and keep to set deadlines for completing elements of the application.

Writing the Proposal

- Select the team or individual to write the grant application.

- Break the project down into elements and assign completion time frames to keep the process moving.

- If only one person is writing the proposal, ensure that they have ready access to all the information / staff / partner agencies necessary to complete the application.

If an individual is charged with writing the application they must have access to all the information necessary to complete a competitive proposal.   In addition there should be one or two people available to review the package prior to submission.

Writing the Proposal continued

- Leave time to properly review the application prior to submission
- Ensure the submission is "reviewer friendly"
- Have all partnership agreements, and financial commitments completed prior to grant application submission

Do not leave partnership agreements to the end. Complete all agreements and any other required forms as early as possible.

Use the NOFA (RFP) to develop a worksheet to guide your writing process. Using the information in the RFP will ensure you do not miss any issues that the program description lists as important.

For example - If the NOFA asks how you will reach out to potential clients, you should list how your target population will learn about your program (referrals, flyers, publications, partner agencies case managers, etc.)

Use the RFP to develop a worksheet:

LIST ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED IN YOUR NEED STATEMENT	DEFINE THE KINDS OF DATA YOU NEED TO ADDRESS	LIST POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR THE DATA
Demographics and economics of the community being targeted for services	*racial mix*	*Census*
	employment and poverty rates	*Census / Labor Department*
	income levels	*Census / Labor Department*
Define in detail specific needs of the community – using hard evidence that the needs exist	*education levels, school quality*	*Education Department / local school district*
	teen pregnancy, single parents	*Social Services Department / Youth Department*

Other Things of Importance (Use the Space Below to Answer the Following Questions)

How will you screen clients if you have limited resources?

What restrictions, if any will be placed on potential clients?

What partner agencies will be assisting with referrals?

Is there other information needed to document the expected number of people to be served by your program?

All grants require the same basic information:

Common Elements of NOFAs, RFPs and Grant Applications

All funding proposals want the same basic information:

- NEED - What is the problem, where is it taking place and who is impacted
- CAPACITY – Why your organization is best able to address the problem
- SCOPE OF SERVICES (work plan) – What will you do with the funds to address the problem

The funder will provide information within their application what they want to support. Their intent should match the intent of the program being proposed. A funder supporting local health clinics may not support a housing rehabilitation program that includes eliminating lead based paint. Even though there is a connection between contaminated housing and elevated blood lead levels in children. A better fit might be to ask for support for the testing of children at the clinics to further
determine
the extent of the problem.

Common Elements continued

- BUDGET – What is it going to cost and who else is contributing funds
- EVALUATION – How will you evaluate the impact the program has and how will you use the evaluation information for reporting successes. How will the evaluations be used to guide the program as it goes forward.

Common Elements Restated

- Identify and prioritize community needs and problems
- Document capacity to perform the program that will address the needs
- Detail the plan of services to be provided including; delivery, partnerships, location, expectations and the evaluation strategy to be used to show a measurable change in condition for participants. Prepare a Logic model
- Detail the costs and include a narrative
- Complete all required forms, certifications and reviews prior to submission

NEED for Project

Why should this program be the priority?

The first item, NEED is where the problem being faced by the community is fully explained and supported by statistics and other relevant data.

Need for Project

- Explain how community need ties into the grant program's purpose
- Use most recent statistics
    - Utilize census.gov (American FactFinder)
    - Local government data sources, reports and plans, community assessments, etc.
- Compare target area to region and nation
- Demonstrate through facts
- Avoid jargon and rhetoric

Need Statement

- WHO is affected?
- WHAT is happening?
- WHERE does the situation take place?
- WHY is it a problem?
- WHAT ELSE can you tell us about the situation?
- Who else thinks it is a problem?
- What are the underlying causes?
- What are the effects of this problem?

Analytical Techniques can include:

Compare to a Peer: Target neighborhood to a nearby neighborhood

Compare to City/Region: Compare target neighborhood to entire city

Track Neighborhood Change: Track neighborhood change with change in city or region over time.

Look at the spread range: Groups at less than, equal to, greater than in comparison between neighborhood and city or neighborhood to neighborhood

In framing the project, ensure you state it in terms of the clients, not the agency providing the service.

In other words, the agency does not lack the funds to provide a service. Instead, there is a critical need in the community for a particular service. There are insufficient resources to address the need. Given additional funding and support, XYZ nonprofit will be able to provide this much needed service to the target population, x

Need Statement

- Accurate picture
- Convince reviewers
- Urgent problem
- Build a strong case
- Straight forward, powerful statement
- Use the most important facts and statistics and use verifiable local data and facts about the target population

number of hours a day, y number of days a week. In a given period of time, participants will demonstrate a change in condition. We will evaluate participants on a regular basis and document the changes, and use the evaluation process to improve service delivery.

Always avoid circular reasoning:

Circular Reasoning is best explained by an example:

"We do not have a community swimming pool"

"We should have a pool"

"We will know we are successful if we do/or do not build a pool"

"We are successful because we now have a pool"

Need Statement

- Credible sources
- Don't make claims that go beyond the data.
- Use hard and soft data
  - statistics
  - facts
  - stories
  - anecdotal information
- Don't use circular reasoning.
- Show that people will use your program

However there was no analysis if a pool was wanted or necessary. What is an adjacent community recently completed construction of a large regional community center with a swimming complex.

Six Basic Approaches

- Key informants
- Community forums
- Case studies
- Statistical analysis
- Surveys
- Studies of literature and research

Where to look for data:

- Census data (www.census.gov), and American Factfinder
- State agencies
- Local governments
- Local community groups
- Colleges and universities
- Local, state or national foundations
- State, regional or national associations
- Self-generated data (survey "customers")

For other information you can look at the American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census) which replaced the long form for gaining detailed community information. You can link to the ACS from: http://www.factfinder.census.gov

Capacity

Why Your Agency is the BEST Agency to Conduct the Program.

The next major component of most grant applications is the **CAPACITY** of the nonprofit to conduct the program and perform the work.

Capacity

- Why is your organization the best one to provide the service or perform the program?
- Have you the staff with sufficient experience to perform the services you plan or will you hire? Will consultants be involved?
- Can you collect and secure the information on clients served, and can you meet reporting requirements?
- Can you operate on a reimbursement basis?

New nonprofits often have a difficult time showing that they have the capacity to perform the work outlined in their "Scope of Services" – or work plan.

A new organization can seek out a larger organization to sponsor a program allowing it to be a sub-grantee of theirs. This will enable the program to be started without having to seek 501 (C) (3) status. In addition, being a part of a larger organization gives the program legitimacy early on. Once established and operating, the program can go on to become independent of the sponsor organization.

Information on your organization's capacity should be readily available and can be collected in advance of finding a NOFA or RFP. Another suggestion is to utilize the experiences of your Board. They can become a working Board with direct oversight of your program until your agency has sufficient capacity to fully run the project.

Staff and Organization Profile

- Your mission and how this program fits
- History, structure, programs, expertise
- Who you serve, how many people, why they rely on you
- Experience of key staff

Project Personnel

- **Provide detailed job descriptions**
  - Paid staff
  - Volunteers
- **Highlight qualifications of proposed staff**
  - Include resumes (if applicable)
- **Demonstrate staff's ability to relate to target population**
- **Address staff's professional development**
- **Align salaries with time and effort**

Most nonprofits work with an extensive list of volunteers. Volunteer hours can be counted as part of the resources brought into the program. Check with partner organizations to see the hourly value of volunteer time and reflect it within the program budget. However, if counted as a contribution, you must track the hours of service contributed for all volunteers and keep the records for monitoring purposes.

Prepare an agency resume and keep it current and readily available for use in proposal development.

Work Plan

Scope of Services

This section details the scope of services provided to the target population, in a given geography, for a set period of time using the resources outlined in the budget.

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The Work Plan (for HUD NOFA's it is the Scope of Services) is the heart of the application. This section provides the details of the program being proposed, how it will be administered, where the services will be located, who will be served, how clients will be recruited, and

Work Plan – Project Design

- **Should meet the stated need**
- **Reflect the life of the grant project**
- **Demonstrate a well thought out plan**
  - Note studies and research findings
- **Detail recruitment of target population**
- **Build community partnerships**
- **Develop contingency plans**

how the impacts of the services will be monitored and reported. The project design should clearly reflect how the proposed program of services will address the problem highlighted in the NEED statement.

No agency works alone. Remember to provide clear information on the roles your partner agencies will play in delivering services.

Remember, you do not need to reinvent the wheel. There are model programs existing across the country being successfully implemented by small as well as large nonprofit organizations. Research how other communities are handling local problems and replicate programs that have shown measurable success.

Various methods for meeting a need could include providing a service at a set location, door-to-door, and through a web site thereby tailoring the service to the needs of an individual. It all depends on the circumstances and conditions that best fit persons receiving the services and the resources available to provide assistance.

Approach/Implementation Plan

- Involve stakeholders and "customers."
- Address cultural competency
- Describe you partners and what they will specifically do

It is important to reach out to your target population as you craft how your work plan will be implemented. In your implementation plan you should ensure that once you are up and running, your clients will be able to take advantage of your program. For example, if you only offer a first-time-homebuyer class on weekdays, it will be difficult for working families to attend. Offering the program at night might be a better alternative, but it could present daycare issues for parents who wish to attend or how often the program is offered to be given in a second language may not be clear without input from the community.

Project Services

- Incorporate proven methods to accomplish the program's goals and objectives
- Tailor services to benefit the target community
- Vary methods of meeting the need
- Emphasize individualized services
- Cite examples of activities

If you are relying on partner agencies to provide a service that is critical to the success of your program, be fully aware of their capacity to meet the demands of the program will place on the organization. Prior to submitting your grant application secure a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between your organization and any partner agencies. The

MOU should outline the full extent of services your partner(s) will provide including any specific information on compensation and reporting. If your organization is taking lead on the project you must make sure your partner agency understands what records need to be kept, how payments will be handled, insurance and liability issues and what approval process has been established for any change in services. (A Sample MOU is in the appendix.)

Most nonprofits work with an extensive list of volunteers. Volunteer hours can be counted as part of the resources brought into the program. Check with partner organizations to see the hourly value of volunteer time and reflect it within the program budget. However, if counted as a contribution, you must track the hours of service for all volunteers and keep the records for monitoring purposes.
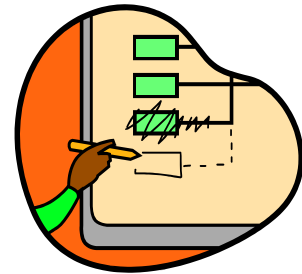
Evaluation

How will you know you have met your objectives?

How have you created *CHANGE* in your target population?

Today all granting organization REQUIRE accountability of their grantees. Organizations must demonstrate both *commitment* and *competence* in a highly demanding environment. Results are in the lives of people *outside* the organization. A strong evaluation strategy is an essential part of any program proposal.

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Project Evaluation

- **Measure goals and objectives**
  - Are they ambitious and attainable?
  - What indicators will demonstrate progress?
  - Are they achieved through services?

- **Review project performance monthly or on a quarterly basis**
  - Does it meet the need outlined in the proposal?
  - Can the program be successfully replicated?

- **Include staff input and participant feedback in determining program success**

Measuring Results

- **Outcomes are benefits to:**
- Individuals
- Families
- Organizations
- Communities

... from their participation in a program or service.

Outcomes are always measurable and answer the other big "So What?" question

The evaluation strategy may be part of the work plan or may be a separate section of RFP or NOFA. For HUD, project evaluation requires submission of a Logic Model. One of the biggest keys to creating a valuable evaluation strategy is to understand the difference between "outcomes" and "outputs."
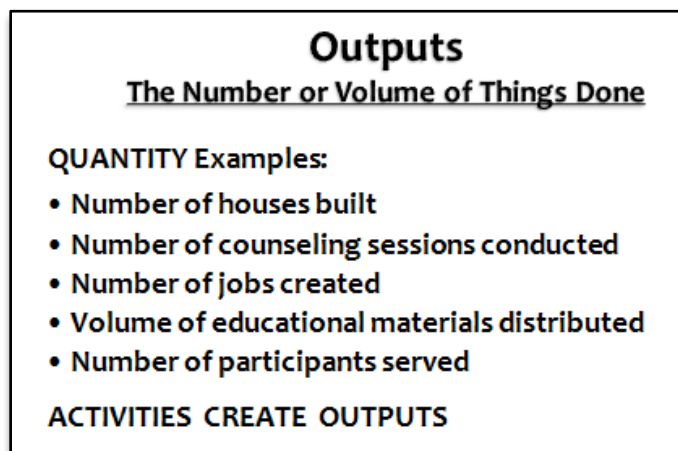
Outcomes are the measurable benefits achieved through the program, such as:

- Increase in participants' knowledge

- Change in how participants think

- Change in what participants can do

- Change in participant behavior

- Change in participant conditions as a result of the program.

Outcomes must be:

- ✓ Simple, clear and understandable

- ✓ Realistic

- ✓ Manageable

- ✓ Identifies a specific group of clients

- ✓ Specifies a time frame

- ✓ Measures an end, not a means to an end

Outcome measures are taken after service has been delivered

Outputs
The Number or Volume of Things Done

QUANTITY Examples:
- Number of houses built
- Number of counseling sessions conducted
- Number of jobs created
- Volume of educational materials distributed
- Number of participants served

ACTIVITIES CREATE OUTPUTS

See the following example:

The goal of the XYZ Homebuyer Education Program is to offer participants information on purchasing their first home, give them skills to ensure they retain the home they purchase and provide them information to prevent them from taking on too much debt or falling victim to predatory lending practices.

The original application anticipated the following would occur:

After one year 10 classes would have been held, and 220 potential homeowners would be provided homebuyer education. At least 130 would go on to purchase homes by the year's end and none would fall prey to predatory loans.

The actual results of the program after two years are:

Output Yr 1	Outcome Year 1	Outcome Year 2
10 Homebuyer classes held, 200 potential homebuyers participated	85 participants purchased a home with a 30 yr. fixed rate non-predatory mortgage.	81 participants still in their home 20 additional Yr 1 participants purchased a home – 30 yr, fixed rate non-predatory mortgage 4 - yr 1 homebuyers lost their homes due to economic problems 3 – yr 1 homebuyers refinanced into predatory loans

Budget

How much will it cost and who is helping to pay for it?

There is a full section in the guide book on Financial Management to aid in defining issues related to budgeting. For the purposes of this presentation the key items to remember are:

1. ensure the budget correctly reflects all resources
2. properly document leveraged resources

Budget

- **Budget for the life of the grant**
  - Allowable costs
  - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
  - Cost of living increases
- **Address matching requirements (letters of commitment, MOU's)**
- **Seek non-Federal support**
- **Focus on sustainability**

Ensure your application accurately shows you are only requesting funds for costs allowable under the NOFA.

Other funders must provide a letter of commitment (or MOU) on letterhead clearly stating what the y are contributing, what the funds will be used for, the time frame that the funds will be provided, and any conditions related to the funds, The letter must then be signed by an authorized official.

As previously mentioned all grants are temporary and the long term viability of the project is secure and will be continued once the grant funds are expended.

Here is a very simple budget form showing some typical categories. All government grants provide budget forms that must be completed and many private funders do as well.

Budget	Source	Public	Private	Total
Salary and benefits				
Insurance and Taxes				
Travel / transportation				
Printing and copying				
Space and Equipment				
Audit and Legal Expenses				
Other / Miscellaneous				

And now a brief word from our sponsor…

Federal Applications

SF refers to Standard Forms. Most federal grant program use a number of standard forms and supplement the application package with specific agency forms tailored for a particular program. There are generally a series of certifications and assurances that must also be submitted. These include Anti-Lobbying certification, Drug-free Workplace, etc.
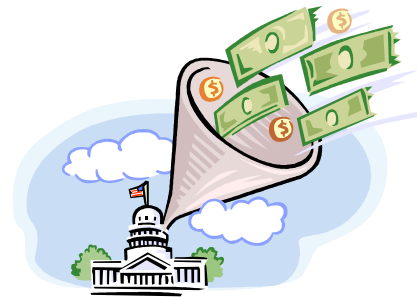
Completing a Federal Application

- SF 424 "face page"
- SF 524 budget form
- Budget narrative
- Certifications and assurances
- One-page abstract
- Application narrative
- Appendix

If you are required to provide an abstract or project summary prepare it *after* the application is completed. This allows you to pull out highlights from each section to prepare a comprehensive overview of the application.

ONLY include items specifically called for in the NOFA.

As stated throughout this workbook - Register EARLY in grants.gov! Review the NOFA carefully. If there are citations or regulations that are unfamiliar do not skip them, ask for clarification. Once an agency is awarded and accepts federal funds there is an obligation to comply with all program requirements.

A GRANT IS A CONTRACT!

Failure in compliance is serious, it is a breach of contract and the funds could be terminated. Agencies found out of compliance are generally required to pay any expended funds back to the government.

Submitting the Application

- See application notice for submission details
  - Grants.gov
  - Agency-specific Web portal
  - Hard Copy in the mail if required
- Be aware of registration procedures and complete all paperwork early
- Allow time for application to be submitted (especially if it is an electronic submission)
- Determine the application's deadline – including both date and time

Processing the Application

- Received by the awarding agency
- Given a unique ID number
- Screened for edibility
- Reviewed by a panel of experts
- Scored and ranked
- Recommended for funding

The application is electronically submitted to grants.gov prior to the due date. Once the due date is passed, all applications are electronically sent to HUD's program office. Once submitted the Department reviews the application for completeness and rates and ranks it on how it meets the NOFA's requirements & the programs intent.

Selection Criteria

- Reviewers look at how the application addresses questions related to:
  - Need for the Project
  - Program Design
  - Project Services
  - Personnel
  - Project evaluation strategy
  - Budget
  - Partnerships and Community Support
  - Program or project history

After it is determined the application is complete and the applicant eligible, the package is rated and ranked. All applicants are awarded funding based on their score, highest scoring application first. Once all funds are obligated the threshold score is determined and all remaining applications falling below the threshold are rejected.

Valuable Resources

- Technical assistance
  - Workshops
  - Web casts (www.hud.gov)
  - Conference calls
- Federal or State program contact
- Grant.gov customer response information
  - 1-800-518-4726
  - support@grants.gov

There are a host of resources available for grant writers seeking additional information on federal programs. Contact your local HUD office for additional information.